

The Ballarat Naturalist

July 2008



Trailing Goodenia
Goodenia lanata
(Club Logo)

WALK TO THE FALLS



Claire Dalman crosses Lal Lal Creek

On the 9th November 1885, members of the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria and the Ballarat Field Club met for a joint excursion to the Lal Lal & Moorabool Falls. On May 25th 2008, a celebration of this event took place to mark the opening of a new walking track between the two falls, organised by the Lal Lal Falls Advisory Committee with funding from a number of organisations.

In 1885, the groups made their way by the 6.30am train to Lal Lal railway station and thence on foot or by carriage to the Lal Lal Falls. *Buggies were waiting for those ladies who considered the three miles walk too much for the beginning of a day's work, a kind attention, however, that was not taken advantage of by any of the ladies from the metropolis, who preferred on such a beautiful morning walking over the green sward.*

In 2008 approximately 280 cars and 500-600 people from many organisations with an interest in the locality arrived for an 11 am start. After a number of introductory comments and a welcoming Aboriginal smoking ceremony, walkers fol-

lowed the 2.4km mown track towards the Moorabool Falls.

(Members) followed the lead of Mr. Jas. Oddie (president BFC) on a piebald pony, or rather that of a veritable Highland piper, engaged for the day by Mr. Oddie, who soon filled his bags and drew from his pipes such inspiriting marches, that the way seemed short while following his ribbons gaily fluttering in the breeze.

Two pipers had been engaged for our occasion, playing well-known tunes such as the Skye Boat Song, Scottish Soldier and Scotland the Brave. We crossed the sadly depleted flow of the Lal Lal Creek by a causeway now considerably above present water levels and followed the valley along the contour. *The walk, in the somewhat early morning, was pleasant in the extreme, the views along the Moorabool valley being extremely fine.* A cool overcast day was our lot – and the views to the Moorabool revealed a dry Lal Lal Reservoir!

The Eucalypts at this period of the year putting out their young foliage, give a variety of colour that redeems the landscape from the monotonous sameness that characterises it at other seasons. Indeed, the reds and yellows mingling with the greys and olives gave a variety as charming as the autumn tints of northern lands.

Kath Chapman, a local artist, had been engaged by the Committee to produce artwork depicting the local environment in consultation with the FNCRB, and attached to some impressive trees were illustrations on fabric of endemic plants such as the Hairy Anchor Plant which the club had propagated and replanted upstream of the Falls; Nankeen Kestrel and Kookaburra, a butterfly, Dwarf Bush-pea, Tree Violet and the Copperhead Snake. Illustrations from Lal Lal Primary School students adorned other trees as well as Kath's own interpretation of the locality. Racing at the local racecourse was shown as part of the history.

The hard pull along the bed of the stream over the boulders, and through the prickly scrub, made the camping ground with its green carpet and white tablecloth look very inviting, and the strains of the piper playing a lively march for dinner sounded sweet music in the ears of hungry scientists.

Some geologists and professors were tapping, not rocks but bottles of chablis and claret; entomologists carving hams and pies; botanists busy at tarts and sandwiches, while the genial president of the Ballarat Club himself presided at the teapot....

A marquee had been erected near the Moorabool Falls in case of inclement weather but in the sheltered valley we ate our picnic which we'd backpacked, and inspected the Moorabool Falls which none of us remembered seeing before. Again there was a mere drip falling into the pool at the base of the rocks.

Protoplasm having been consumed in sufficient quantity, at the instance of the chairman, Mr. Oddie, the healths of the Queen and the Prince of Wales were drunk with the usual musical honours. Mr. Halley was called on to speak....proposing on behalf of the Melbourne visitors a hearty vote of thanks to the Ballarat Field Club and its officers for the kind thoughtful way in which all arrangements had been made, and complimented the city of Ballarat on its admi-

rably conducted School of Mines...Mr. Oddie...announced tea for five o'clock.

A bus had been provided for those who didn't wish to retrace their steps to Lal Lal, and those who hadn't had their sandwiches at Moorabool Falls made use of the new electric BBQs at Lal Lal Picnic Ground. Over-mature Radiata pines have been felled along the edge of the ground which is now much more open.

Little groups of collectors now started out in all directions. Green nets might be seen waving in pursuit of deftly flitting lepidoptera. Umbrellas spread to catch the coloeoptera shaken from the bushes. A follower of Isaac Walton vainly trying if speckled trout lived in the pool beneath the waterfall. A painter in oils trying to catch the changing beauty of the landscape. A couple of photographers with their heads constantly under their black cloths....

Erica Nathan who had liaised with us over promotion of this event said that the events leading up to the celebration as well as the event itself were being videoed; and plenty of participants had digital cameras in hand. Probably the most interesting shot would be of the crocodile of folk strung out as they crossed the Lal Lal creek just upstream of the Falls.

Tea, cocoa and eatables were ready at about five...As the evening drew on and the setting sun began to cast long shadows, "Auld Lang Syne" was sung, and young and old joined in dancing "Sir Roger de Coverley".

Twenty-five members and visitors from the Melbourne Club, of whom seven were ladies, and the total number present of both clubs with friends numbered about seventy.

The organisers were pleased with the 2008 turnout, and the FNCB was represented by 20 members which was really encouraging.

(Text in italics is quoted from *The Victorian Naturalist* VOL 2 1885-86)

Carol Hall

Come along to our Club excursion on Sunday July 6 and help us
maintain our Linton Trust for Nature Block.
Bring gloves and a hoe and any other tools you may need
to clear weeds.
Bring your binoculars to look at the birds.
Bring your morning tea and lunch.

CANYONS OF THE COLORADO PLATEAU

SPEAKER: CAROL HALL, GEOGRAPHER & CLUB MEMBER

The Colorado Plateau in the US lies between 34° & 40°N, spreading over the states of Utah, Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. It is drained by the Colorado River which rises in the Rocky Mountains and flows west, then south into the Gulf of California. Geologically it consists of extensive areas of colourful, nearly horizontal, mostly sedimentary rocks, sculpted into plateaus, mesas and deeply incised canyons. Precipitation varies between 7 & 15 inches a year depending on altitude, with snowfall significant over 6000'. The Plateau lies between 5000' and 8000' above sea level with some scattered ranges reaching 11,000'. Vegetation is sparse in the lower areas, with forests in higher, cooler wetter areas.

I visited this spectacular region in February 2008 on a Landscape Photography workshop, having known of its existence ever since university days. As a geographer it was wonderful to be able to visit it at last and also to be able to make the most of the photographic opportunities by being at the right places at the right time of day. As it was winter there were few tourists around and the air was incredibly clear thanks to lack of heat haze and low humidity.

So why is this area so spectacular? Climate and geology combine to produce unique features. The limestones, shales and sandstones were laid down in environments ranging from warm oceans to sandy shorelines, muddy swamps, fresh lakes and deserts with dunes like today's Sahara. The shales are soft, the limestones and sandstones usually hard and massive. In Monument Valley a thick layer of sandstone overlies a weaker reddish shale; moisture is concentrated where the two meet, and the calcium carbonate (CaCO_3) which "glues" the sand grains together is dissolved, loosening the particles, while the shale is readily eroded by running water. In a desert, you say – running water? In summer thunderstorms are frequent, with torrential rain producing flash floods – which do all the damage in a matter of hours. Otherwise most drainage lines are dry except for major rivers like the Colorado which are fed by snowmelt.

For 6 months of the year night-time temperatures fall below freezing, while during the day they rise above zero. Thus any moisture on the rocks is constantly freezing and thawing; water expands by 10% of its volume when it freezes, thus wedging apart the rock particles which fall to the ground and are then re-



Monument Valley Sunrise

moved by wind or water. This process is far more important in desert geomorphology than previously thought. For photography we would be up before dawn in temperatures of minus 10 to zero, then if it was sunny during the day, it would be pleasantly mild at 6-10°.

Why is the Grand Canyon so deep? It is 5500' deep at viewpoints on the South Rim near Grand Canyon Village. The Colorado plateau is still rising thanks to tectonic forces which today continue to force up all the young fold mountains of the world – the Himalayas, Alps, Andes and Rocky Mountains. In these areas rivers are being lifted and their gradients steepened, so their power to cut down is increased. As the rocks are practically horizontal, undercutting results in blocks falling off, thus maintaining vertical cliffs. The San Juan river, a Colorado tributary, is noted for its entrenched meanders, 1000' below the lookout at Goosenecks



Grand Canyon

State Park. Such power results in an estimated 400,000 tons of sediment being carried daily by the Colorado – or it did before Hoover Dam and Glen Canyon Dam were built.

At Arches National Park the erosion of joints caused by the movement of underlying salt has resulted in long walls of rock being eroded at the base where the sandstone sits on impervious shales. Weathering by freeze-thaw, solution of CaCo_3 and the effects of

gravity have given rise to caves which erode through to form arches – some 2000 of them in this area! Landscape Arch is 300' wide and 90' high.

At Capitol Reef National Park an eroded monocline has given rise to fascinating scenery and a geological destination favoured by many students in the US. A massive sandstone forms domes which gave rise to the name Capitol, resembling the Capitol building in Washington DC. Further west Zion National Park is reached by a series of spectacular hairpin bends and a tunnel. Again the same massive sandstone forms the walls of this canyon, eroded by the perennial Virgin River.



Landscape Arch

Finally at Bryce we see the youngest geological formations of the region where the edge of a plateau is being dissected by all the processes we've mentioned into a multitude of spires and pinnacles called "hoodoos". The rock consists of fine layers of muds, silts and clays with occasional fine layers of sand, indicative of rapidly fluctuating changes in depositional conditions. Together with varying degrees of cohesion by CaCo_3 , the reddish layers, which glow in the early morning light, have been sculpted into fascinating shapes, their shapes accentuated by snow lying on the ledges.

What can grow in these extremes of climate? Much of the areas we were in, including steep canyon sides and between 5000'-8000' were characterised by a high proportion of bare ground and juniper and pinyon pine whose roots reached down into the joints in search of shade and water. Junipers are long lived and slow-



Hoodoos at Bryce

growing, their often contorted silvery trunks and branches forming interesting shapes. The difference in growth between north and south facing slopes was noticeable. In Monument Valley there were yuccas as well. At altitudes above this Ponderosa Pines predominated, and higher still in those areas around 9000' we encountered firs, spruces and aspens where precipitation was greater and temperatures cooler, with snow lying for longer. The only wildlife we came across were ravens and mule deer, neither of which leave

for warmer zones in winter.

These formations throughout the Plateau are linked – because the layer forming the top rim of the Grand Canyon is the lowest one exposed in Zion Canyon; the topmost layer in Zion is the lowest one exposed in Bryce – a series of steps if you will - and the whole area between the Grand Canyon and Bryce is known as the Grand Staircase. This has all been possible because of the relative lack of deformation of the sediments – the plateau has been lifted with little folding or faulting, with the exception of the gentle dome through which the Grand Canyon has cut down – off-centre, resulting in the North Rim being around 1000' higher than the South Rim.

Deserts are great places to see geomorphology – there's little vegetation or soil to cover the rock formations because the



Juniper

lack of moisture inhibits the deeper weathering characteristic of hot wet climes. And if the rocks had been dipping steeply there would have been a succession of scarp and dip slopes instead of the dramatic mesas, buttes and canyons.

Carol Hall.

EXCURSION - BLACKWOOD FUNGI

LED BY LES HANRAHAN, 8 JUNE 2008

We were joined by six members of the Castlemaine Field Naturalists' club for today's excursion.

An Eastern Yellow Robin was spotted by one Castlemaine member in the same place as one bird was observed last year in the Jack Cann Reserve.

Les led us south along the Great Dividing Trail and it wasn't long before we made our first observations. Among the fungi seen were *Russula persanguinea*, the Fly Agaric *Amanita muscaria*, *Laccaria* sps. which have a bloom on their gills similar to the bloom seen on grapes, and a pink slime mould *Fuligo septica* on an area recently burnt. Also seen were a compact cluster of Sulphur Tufts *Hypholoma fasciculare*, the Tall Mycena *Mycena cystidiosa*, the Yellow-stemmed Mycena *Mycena epipterygia*, *Cortinarius* sp., a leather fungi *Stereum* sp. Yellow Jelly Bells *Heterotextus miltinus*, and a Mottled Gill *Panaeolus sphinctrinus* that grows on dung.

On a great, fallen and slowly-rotting tree trunk across the track we found a shelf fungus *Crepidotus nephrodes*, a whole row of blue Pixie Parasols *Mycena interrupta* and, and a coral fungus *Clavicornia piperata* that has a peppery taste.

In this area were also seen *Galerina hypnorum*, usually associated with moss, Bleeding Mycena *Mycena kuurkacea*, the Lilac Cortinar *Cortinarius albobio-laceus*, Little Stinker *Marasmiellus affixus*, *Galerina patagonica*, *Pluteus atromarginatus* which has a black edge to gills, Velvet Marasmius *Marasmius elegans*, and *Macrotyphula juncea* which look little white pokers. *Cortinarius rotundisporus*, the little orange spikes of *Calocera* sp. in groups on fallen branch, the soldier's helmet-shaped with a pointed top *Mycena subgalericulata* growing on wood, the reddish Parasol Mushroom *Lepiota haemorrhagica*, and *Leucoagaricus rubrotinctus* were also found.

Kookaburras, sentinels of the Australian bush, called at a distance.

Near where we had lunch, two further species were identified: the Field Puffballs

Vascellum pretense, and Saffron Milk Cap *Lactarius deliciosus*. Carol Hall mentioned a point made by author Bruce Fuhrer about how the introduced Fly Agaric species *Amanita muscaria* is taking over habitat from the native *Amanita* species – the same species on which the native animal, the potoroo feeds, perhaps further compromising this species in its habitat.

We then headed in the opposite direction on the Great Dividing Trail for the afternoon, and further species were discovered: *Psilocybe subaeruginosa*, Funnel Cap *Clitocybe clitocyboides*, *Clavicornia colensoi*, three cortinaria *Dermocybe cramesina*, *Cortinarius australiensis*, and the Australian White Cortinaria *Cortinarius austroalbidus*, a bracket fungi *Postia pelliculosa*, *Anthracoephyllum archeri*, *Gymnopilus allantopus*, another coral fungus *Ramariopsis crocea*. *Leucopaxillus eucalyptorum*, Rainbow fungi *Trametes versicolor*, a whole colony on the side of a dead tree, White Jelly Fungus *Tremella fuciformis*, *Psathyrella aff. pennata* which has a frilly border on the cap, the tiny Little Pin *Rickenella fibula* with an orange cap, and Yellow Belly Buttons *Lichenomphalia chromacea*.

Species seen in the morning and also in the afternoon were a common fungus *Rhodocollybia butyracea*, and a hemispherical capped ‘dungbell’ *Stropharia semiglobata* growing on dung.

We had pleasant weather for the whole day and everyone went away, gaining knowledge of the fungi encountered – rich in range and variety.

Tony Johns

ONE TREE PLAIN

In 1859 Edward Roset traveled from Melbourne to the Lachlan River. He rode across the Plain between Hay and Booligal. The salt bush was prolific and his report led to the occupation and the finding of One Tree. Old maps show that the tree was situated on a long reserve which was surveyed and gazetted in 1901 as a timber reserve, No 32880, the smallest timber reserve in N.S.W., although the Plain stretched 40 miles from Hay to Booligal. Taking its name from the single tree, it is known as One Tree Plain. The historic gum tree crashed to the ground during a gale on the night of January 1st 1900. Many drovers and locals regretted its end.

Note: One Tree is “Hell” in Banjo Pattersons poem “Hay, hell and Bolligal”

Lyndsay Fink

FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB OF BALLARAT INC
A0014919P ABN 13 150 403 135
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING JUNE 2008

Opening and Apologies

The President, Peter Dalman welcomed 24 members. He welcomed back those who had travelled to the ANN get together at Mary River, read a postcard from John and Elaine Gregurke and drew attention to the extensive trading table and thanked Helen Burgess for her contribution.

Apologies were received from John and Elaine Gregurke, Greg and Genny Binns, Bill Murphy and Margaret Martin

Accepted on the motion of Ken Hammond; seconded Peter Billing.

Minutes of previous meeting Tabled and Summarised in Ballarat Naturalist.

Confirmed on the motion of Fran Hanrahan, Seconded Carol Hall.

Correspondence

IN:

- Bendigo Field Naturalists Club: Whirrakee Vol 29 No 4, May 2008.
- University of Ballarat: Statement for use of Horticulture Centre - \$165
- University of Ballarat: Room Hire adjustment notice - \$82.50 credit to be applied against future accounts.
- Victorian Naturalists Vol 125 No 2, April 2008
- Geelong Naturalists: Vol 44. No 1, May 2008
- Land for Wildlife News: Vol 6 No 3, April 2008
- Field Nats News No 176, June 2008
- BOCA: Request for funding support.
- Victorian National Parks Association: Letter recommending 5 actions including response to Green Paper and requesting donation.
- Australian Conservation Foundation: Invitation to evening/luncheon to celebrate successes on 20/21 May.
- City of Ballarat: Re Ballarat Planning Aerodrome and West Common draft land use concept plan.
- Bendigo Bank: May statement.
- Margaret Rotheram: Letter to Les to wish club well for next 12 months and with distant membership subscription.
- City of Ballarat: My Ballarat magazine. May 2008.

Since the committee meeting

- City of Ballarat: My Ballarat magazine. June 2008.
- John Gregurke (26.5.2008): Postcard from Kakadu.
- Bendigo Field Naturalists Club: Whirrakee Vol 29 No 5, June 2008
- Bush Heritage Australia: Request for donation and Newsletter.
- Geelong Naturalists: Vol 44. No 2, June 2008
- Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria: Newsletter, Winter Edition – Edition 42 June 2008 (Incl Ads: Native Orchid Show – 27-28 Sept, Mt Waverly Community Centre; Garden Expo Sat 2 Aug, Pakenham Racecourse; etc.)

OUT:

Nil.

Inwards correspondence received on the motion of Del McDonnell; seconded Peter Billing.

Business arising from correspondence:

Nil.

Reports

Treasurer's Report: Opening Balance: \$4558.59, Income: Subscriptions: \$163, Market Table: \$15.65, Cranbourne excursion: \$495, Total \$673.65; Expenses: Guest speaker expenses: \$16.25, Receipt book: \$3.85, Cranbourne Gardens entry: 156, Auditor gift: \$30, Cranbourne bus: \$264.20, Room hire: \$82.50, Total: \$552.80 Closing Balance: \$4679.44

M: Les Hanrahan S: Ken McDonnell

Cranbourne Botanic Gardens excursion: 13 members attended. Four paid and unfortunately were unable to attend. \$495 collected. Cost \$526.53 Loss \$31.53

Lal Lal falls walk – Over 500 people, 21 club members.

ANN Mary River gathering: Val Hocking, Fran Hanrahan, Helen Burgess and others outlined highlights which included the Territory Wildlife Park, a day at Fogg Dam, an aboriginal cultural tour, Mary River crocodile tour and more. The next ANN gathering will be in 2010 at Chinchilla in Queensland, probably in Spring.

General Business

Excursion Sunday 6 June Fungi. Les said excursion would be to Blackwood, parking at the Garden of St Earth car park. He indicated he had invited Castlemaine club members and that some may join us.

Laminated posters previously stored by Greg were displayed. These had faded and yellowed badly The general opinion was that they had lost their value and no specific suggestions were forthcoming.

Next APS meeting – Wed 11 June, Geoff Beilby “Wet Forest of the Western Otways”. Spoke at SEANA March 2007.

Meeting advised that Jenny Sedgwick is unable to speak at the October meeting or lead the excursion as she will be overseas. John Mildren advised that he had spoken to his neighbours one of whom is a lecturer and researcher at Creswick School of Forestry and the other a consultant on environmental effects in north west Australia and who have indicated they may be prepared to speak to us. John indicated he would approach them with the possibility of speaking either to the October or December meetings.

Show and Tell

No reports

Field Reports

Maureen Christie: University of Charles Sturt monitor placed on her garage roof recorded five different species of bats.

Syllabus Item

Carol Hall – Carol spoke on the topic “Canyons of the Colorado Plateau”. She gave a presentation which included a clear, detailed explanation of the geology of the area accompanied by stunning complementary photographs. Peter Dalman thanked Carol for her talk.

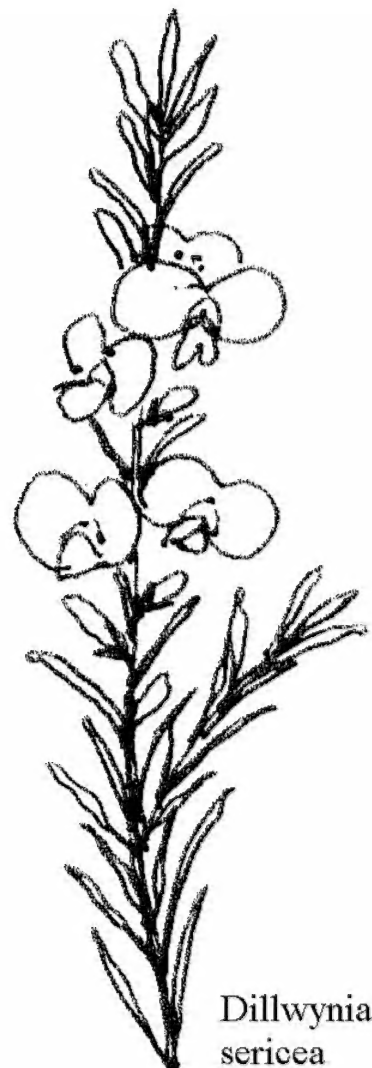
10. Supper



Dillwynia belong to the *Fabaceae* family.
Common name for *Dillwynia glaberrima* is
Smooth Parrot-pea.

Common name for *Dillwynia sericea* is
Showy Parrot pea.

Thanks to Helen Burgess for the illustrations.



CALENDAR 2008

July

Fri 4 Greg Binns—*Honeyeaters*

Sun 6 **Linton Trust for Nature Block**—Committee Members
Bring a hoe, gardening gloves and binoculars—we aim to do some maintenance while observing! There are quite a lot of weeds which need to be removed and other maintenance tasks.

There will be NO Committee meeting in July.

August

Fri 1 Geoff Lay—FNCV —Fungi

Sun 3 Tullaroop—Peter and Claire Dalman

Have you booked your accommodation for our Inglewood Club Camp?

Its not too late to book at Inglewood Motel and Caravan Park
Ph. 5438 3232

Committee

President Mr Peter Dalman

Vice-President Mr Greg Binns

Secretary Mr John Gregurke

Treasurer..... Mr Les Hanrahan

Miss Helen Burgess.....

Mrs Claire Dalman

Mrs Carol Hall

Mrs Val Hocking.....

Mr John Morrish

Dr Frances Hanrahan.....

Ms Nina Netherway (editor).....

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Email: Secretary:

Editor: Nina Netherway,

Website: www.ballarat.yourguide.com.au Click on *Local Info. Search Environment*

Meetings are held at Ballarat Horticultural Centre, cnr. Gregory & Gillies Sts (VicRoads 254 F8) on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm.

Excursions: Depart from Ballarat Market Place (formerly Creswick Plaza) Creswick Rd., Ballarat (VicRoads 255 M10) at 9.30am unless otherwise specified.

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